1773 - 1973

SOUVENIR

LOUDON

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Main Street, Loudon — 1915

BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION

A PROCLAMATION OF THE LOUDON BICENTENNIAL

WHEREAS, the town of Loudon, New Hampshire is, during the year of 1973, celebrating the 200th year since its founding and incorporation by the House of Representatives in the year 1773 ; and

WHEREAS, the decendents of the original settlers and newer residents of said Town of Loudon still remain faithful to the original concepts of liberty, honesty, and industry ; and

WHEREAS, the present day occupants of the Town are God Fearing, Loyal Citizens of the State of New Hampshire and of the United States of America ;

NOW, WE, the Selectmen of Loudon, New Hampshire, do hereby proclaim the year of 1973 as LOUDON BICENTENNIAL YEAR and urge all citizens to take notice.

Gary Deering

Raymie H. Ratten

Arnold E. Stone

Selectmen, Town of Loudon

LOUDON

YEAR OF THE BICENTENNIAL

Dr. Jeremy Belknap, early American philosopher, clergyman, and historian, offers the following conclusion in the final volume of his *History of New Hampshire*, published in 1812:

> *Were I to form a picture of happy society, it would be a town consisting of a due mixture of hills, valleys and streams of water: The land well fenced and cultivated; the roads and bridges in good repair; a decent inn for the refreshment of travellers, and for public intertainments: The inhabitants mostly husbandmen; their wives and daughters domestic manufacturers; a suitable proportion of handicraft workmen, and two or three traders; a physician and lawyer, each of whom should have a farm for his support. A clergyman of any denomination, which should be agreeable to the majority, a man of good understanding, of a candid disposition and exemplay morals; not a metaphysical, nor a polemic, but a serious and practical preacher. A school master who should understand his business and teach his pupils to govern themselves. A social library, annually increasing, and under good regulation. A club of sensible men, seeking mutual improvement. A decent musical society. No intriguing politician, horse jockey, gambler or sot; but all such characters treated with contempt. Such a situation may be considered as the most favorable to social happiness of any which this world can afford.*

As we reflect back on Loudon's two hundred years of incorporated existence, it is clear that our town has come exceedingly close to matching Dr. Belknap's picture of a happy society.

Unfortunately, the concrete historical evidence backing this claim has remained largely unpublished, scattered, or worst of all, lost.

At this point in time, the year of our Bicentennial, the only sizable Loudon history that has been published is a thirty-eight page chapter by Henry J. Osgood which appears in D. Hamilton Hurd's 1885 *History of Merrimack and Belknap Counties*. This sketch is colorful and concise, yet much more of the town's past must be brought to light, including history since 1885. A complete hardbound town history, fully researched and documented, with illustrations, is long overdue.

Material is presently being gathered by the author for such a volume, to be completed within the next two years. Stimulated by the Bicentennial spirit, Loudon's attics and closets are slowly beginning to yield old newspapers, diaries, letters, family bibles, legal documents, maps, postcards, photographs, and heirlooms. It is hoped that the reader might be able to dig out some of these and make them accessible for study. Even a colorful old story passed on by word of mouth would be appreciated.

PEOPLE OF LOUDON

OURS has never been a conspicuous town, yet for the two hundred years an ample measure of strong and respected citizens has come from within its boundaries.

Good families came early to turn a living from the soil. Among the old family names are Batchelder, Brown, Cate, Clough, French, Lovering, Moore, Ordway, Osgood, Sanborn, Stevens, and Tilton; with many others as worthy of mention. It is notable that nearly all these families were from seacoast and lower Merrimack valley towns.

Centenarian stonemason of Irish extraction, and wife. Died 1921, a hundred years old.

Posing for
the family portrait.

Family gathering on Clough's Hill at old Wheeler farm.

Loudon Village in 1890 bears a striking resemblance to the streets of Laredo.

VARIOUS OCCUPATIONS

"The land in Loudon is of varied quality, including some good interval on the borders of Soucook river, by which the township is watered. This river furnishes several valuable mill privileges.

The principal place of business is called Soucook Village, and lies in the south part of the town, east of the river. The site is pleasant and agreeable, and the village contains many good buildings."

Surveyor Richard Potter poses with his compass.

Both tough young men and freshly sawed lumber must someday wear weather's lines.

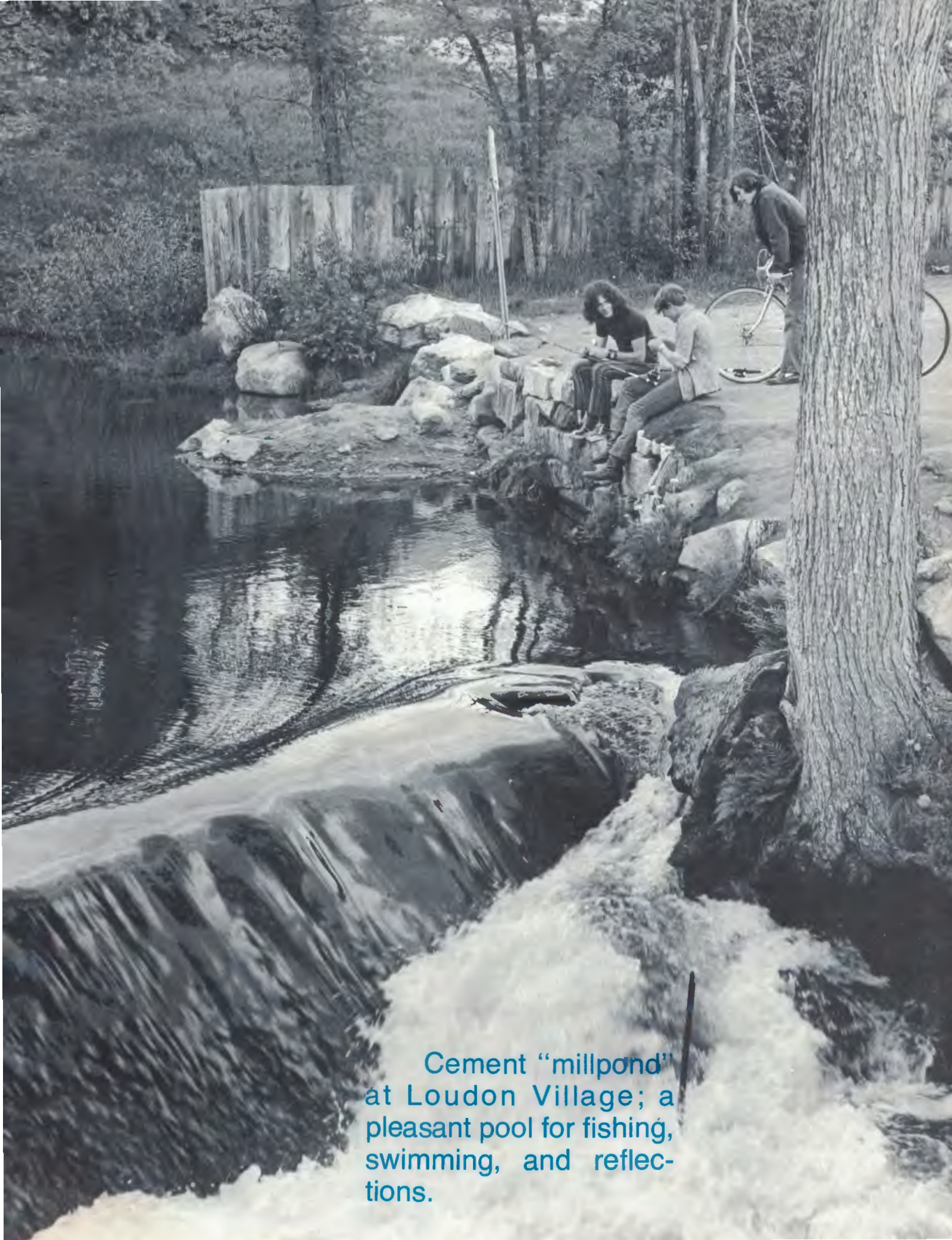
Summer heat and gallon jugs of switchel may have accompanied this Ridge Road silo-filling.

Main Street memories come alive as "Jim" Hackett mans the reins of J.E. Ross' delivery wagon.

"The interest which these families manifested, and the labor performed by them, . . . was worth enduring the toil and hardship through which they lived and labored."

Sabbaths in Loudon are for church going and pleasant drives in one's Sunday finery. Shown above is Jennie Sanborn, Aug. 26, 1962 at the Center Church after receiving the Boston Post Cane for being the town's oldest citizen.

Mrs. Sanborn with her husband John B. Sanborn in 1914, the year that the Loudon Old Home Days Society was organized.



Cement "millpond" at Loudon Village; a pleasant pool for fishing, swimming, and reflections.

Come first Tuesday every March, New Hampshire folks turn out in numbers to their respective town meetings. These gatherings are the purest existing form of democracy, in which the town's citizens become their own mini legislature.

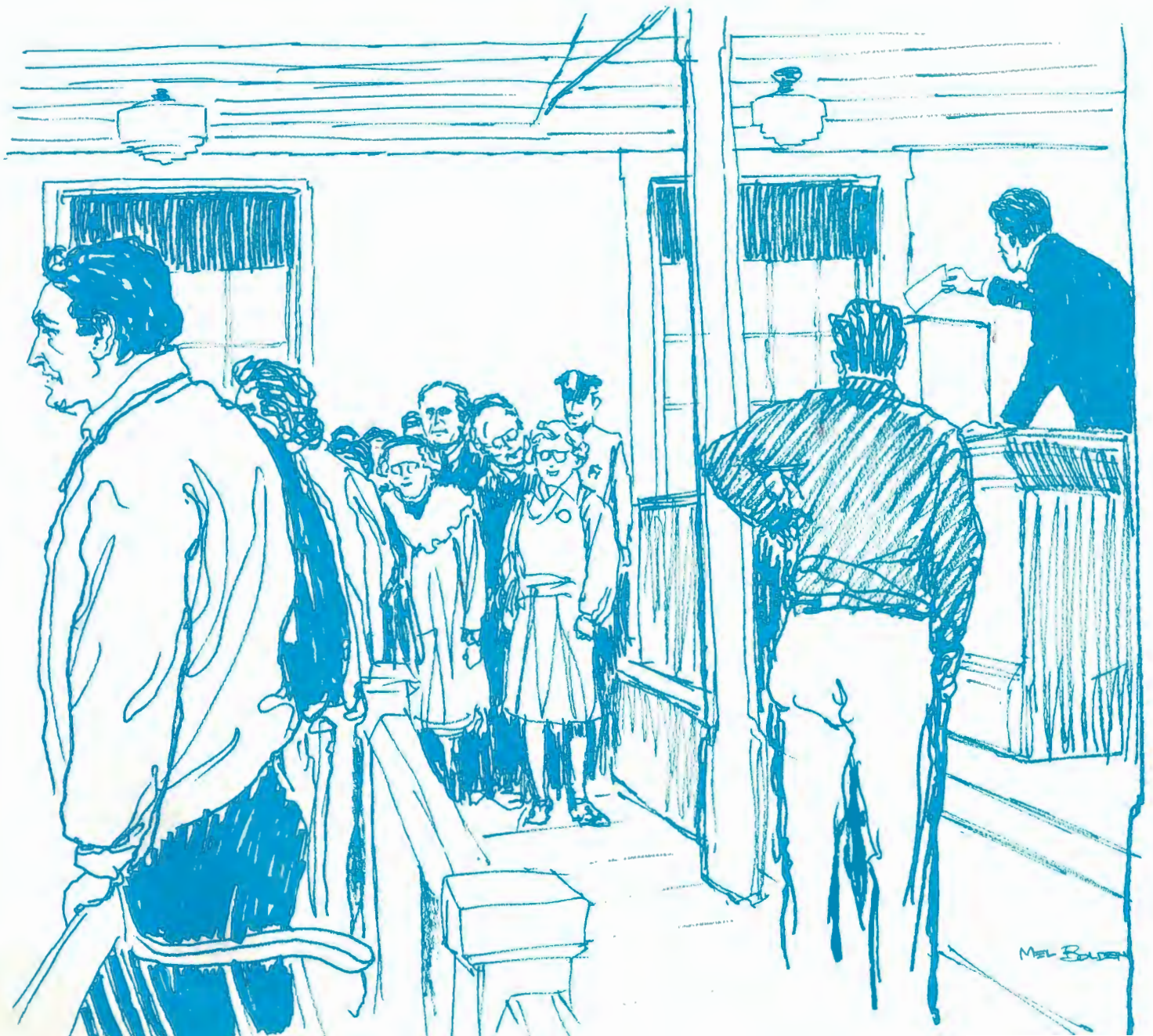
In addition to taking care of town business for the ensuing year, town meeting is a time to shake off winter chill; to get out and renew social contacts; to gossip and talk about the weather.

Our Bicentennial Commemorative coin illustrates the Town Hall at Loudon Center as it might have appeared a century ago. It shares a common edifice with the church, thus revealing its Yankee heritage. In old New England, the cleavage between church and state was indistinct, if present at all. As a result, town meetings mirror governing structures of colonial Congregational parishes.

The first town meeting in Loudon was called and held March 23, 1773 at the home of Abraham Bachelder Jr., by warrant under the hand and seal of Nathan Bachelder, as specified in the town's charter.

Town offices filled that day included moderator, parish clerk, selectmen, constable, surveyors of highways, tything men, hog reeves, field drivers, fence viewers, surveyors of lumber, deer keepers, sealer of weights and measures, and sealer of leather. Later on that same year a special town meeting was held at the house of Stephen Perkins to select a cemetery committee and decide on a specific location for the Meeting House to be built.

In present times on that certain spring day, the eyes of an entire nation turn Loudon's way looking for a sign as New Hampshire holds its first in the nation primary. Indeed a tribute to our small town Yankee judgement.



HYMNS AND SERMONS

OUR first church was the one at Loudon Center, built in 1779. In this historic structure, the first Shaker testimony ever heard in the state was given in this building, September, 1782, by Shaker Elders Ebenezar Cooley and Israel Chauncey. Today very few people realize Shakerism in New Hampshire has its origin in the Loudon Center Church nearly a decade before the Canterbury Shaker society came into existence.

High up in the steeple is a bell cast in 1878 by William Blake and Co. (formerly N.H. Hooper and Co.) Boston, Massachusetts. Blake, in his early years, was an apprentice foundry man to Paul Revere.

An account of the raising of the Loudon Center meeting house appears in Henry J. Osgood's "History of Loudon", a chapter in Hurd's 1885 *History of Merrimack and Belknap Counties*. Recently in a box of old church documents, however, a heretofore unpublished manuscript by Mr. Osgood was found which gives some information not in the published account. Portions of it follow.

At a meeting held November 10th 1777, voted to build the Meeting House by a rate or tax. Also voted to get the timber and draw it to the spot this winter and that labor be three shillings per day. Chose Eliphalet Rollins, Abraham Bachelder, Ezekiel Morrill, Jethro Bachelder, Nathaniel Bachelder, Moses Ordway and Jonathan Clough for the Committee to build the house. Voted to have the house the same bigness as the Epsom house, and to raise seven hundred dollars to get the frame to the spot and frame it. December 4, 1778, voted to add six feet to the length and two feet to the width making the size of the house as it now stands, 44 feet by 60 feet. Also voted that fourteen hundred dollars be raised in addition to the former sum and laid out on Meeting House frame. In 1779 voted one thousand dollars more be raised and laid out in labor at eight dollars per day. Voted the pew privileges be sold at auction to the highest bidder and that the purchaser be allowed twelve months after the house is raised, boarded and shingled, and the lower floor is laid, to build their pews in and that those who do not build in that time, their privilege shall return to the Parish. In the same year voted to buy barrels of rum for the raising of the meeting house. In the selectmen's Cash Account for that year, the following charges are made: Paid Josiah Bachelder for rum $108.16. Paid Reuben Greeley for two quarts of snake root for the raising $12.00.

Snake root is a medicinal herb, also called black cohosh or rattle root, which is used to make bitters. This mildly depressant tonic has been employed for everything from an insect repellent to rheumatism cure.

Rev. John Chamberlain, Baptist minister of Loudon; died Jan. 1, 1893 after 35 years in the ministry. Author of a hymn called "Gospel train."

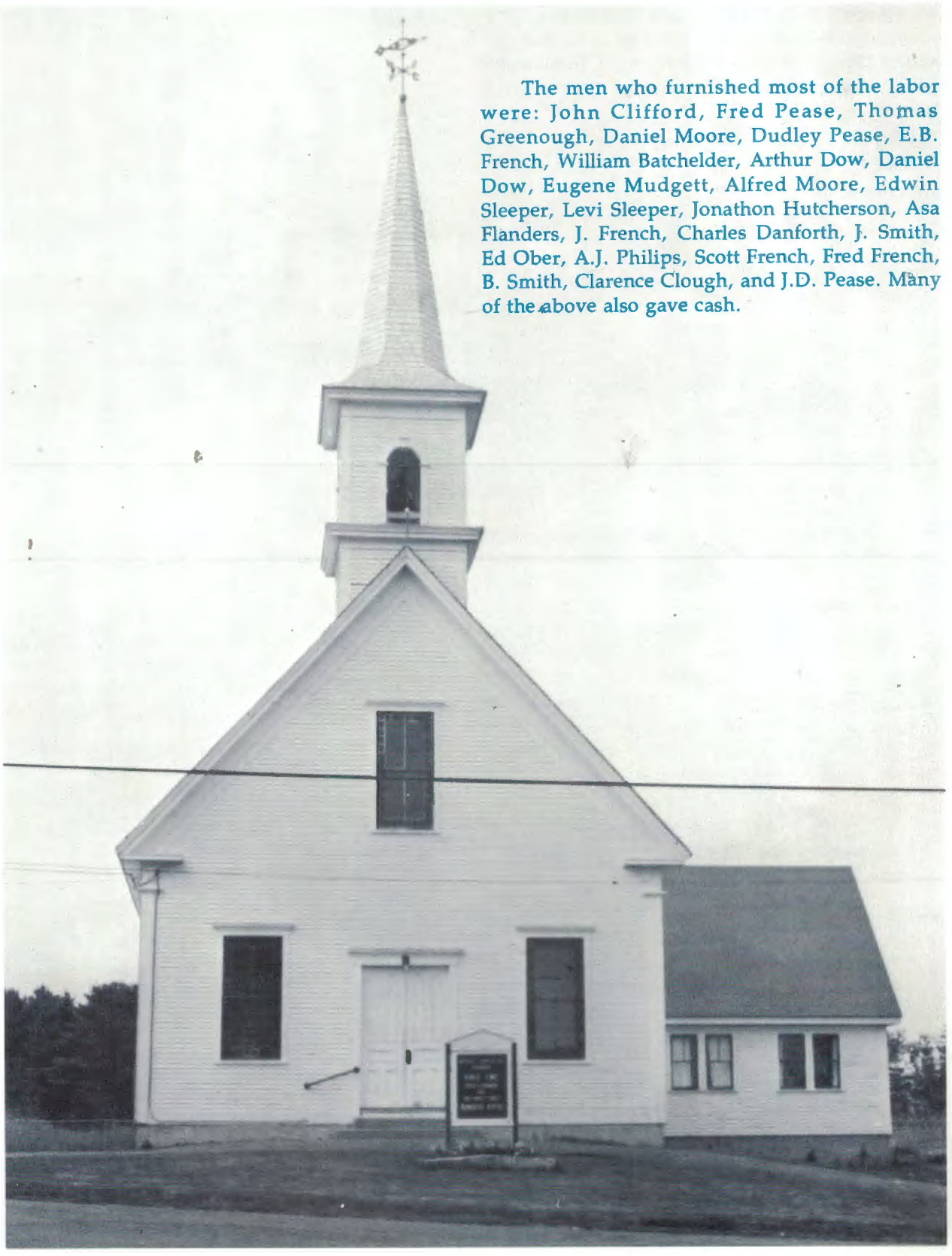
Paid the Rev. Mr. Noble for ministerial services at the raising $1.50. Voted to leave to the committee the providing of the supper for the raising. Voted to pay Mr. Blunt for the trouble to his house when the Meeting House was raised. Voted to give in the tax on the Woodman Lot this year for the timber cut for the Meeting House frame. This lot is No. 135 in the first division of Lots. The frame of this house was raised in the summer of 1779.

1827 saw the construction of a new Congregational church at Loudon Village. In 1863 the members of this church united with the Congregationalists at the Center church. This united group has since held its services at the village in the building shown on pg. 14, while the church at Loudon Center has since been used by the Baptists.

First Deacons of the United church at the Village were Zephaniah Bachelder and John S.R. Brown.

Stephen Moore, who also helped build the Congregational Church at Loudon Village, supplied it with a bell. This bell was cast in 1886 by Meneely and Co., West Troy, N.Y.

On Loudon Ridge in 1822 a church was finished and dedicated. In 1891 the members decided it was inadequate and decided to tear it down. They did so after holding a special funeral



The men who furnished most of the labor were: John Clifford, Fred Pease, Thomas Greenough, Daniel Moore, Dudley Pease, E.B. French, William Batchelder, Arthur Dow, Daniel Dow, Eugene Mudgett, Alfred Moore, Edwin Sleeper, Levi Sleeper, Jonathon Hutcherson, Asa Flanders, J. French, Charles Danforth, J. Smith, Ed Ober, A.J. Philips, Scott French, Fred French, B. Smith, Clarence Clough, and J.D. Pease. Many of the above also gave cash.

A bell for the new church was purchased by Jeremiah Kenniston and Daniel Moore. Mr. Kenniston was a full blooded Indian, who earned most of the money for the bell by chopping wood.

The scrapbook of Isadore Moore about Loudon Ridge contains much colorful material about Elder Harry Shattuck, the second full time minister for the Loudon Ridge Church.

"He came in 1912 and stayed until 1927. For although he has been gone so long his personality was so vivid that I could get a pretty good picture of the man just from the few statements people gave me. Here are some of them. He had the most wonderful sings Sunday evening, mostly all singing. He has a son Oliver, who taught his horse to add, count, and shake his head yes or no to any question you asked. He could get that horse to do most anything. Sunday evenings he used to draw pictures as he talked, sometimes he gave chalk talks in Sunday School, at the Bay and in other places.

Mrs. Shattuck raised the best garden the Ridge has ever seen. His son, Oliver painted the murals in the Wild Life Room at the State House. He used to go for walks early in the morning. Sometimes he would call on you while you were doing chores, say about 5-6 o'clock in the morning. Mrs. Shattuck made the nicest peanut butter, she made it out of fresh roasted peanuts and regular butter. Everybody liked Elder Shattuck; he was on the school board, and often visited the schools. His wife was a Seventh Day Advent and they both kept each other's Sabbaths. He said it made him a better preacher."

MAXFIELD PUBLIC LIBRARY

A Stately Place With Books For All Classes of Mind and Usual Wants

THE Maxfield Public Library was built in 1908-9, fulfilling the last wish of William Maxfield. Mr. Maxfield was born Dec. 28, 1827, and lived inconspicuously on his farm in Loudon close to the Canterbury line. His field of activity was narrow, and never outside of this town. Honest, prudent, and laborious, he died Aug. 3, 1905, unconditionally leaving $2,000 for a free public library.

Prior to this time, several other attempts had been made to quench the literary thirst of Loudon folks. Perhaps the first was in 1800, when Jedediah Tucker, Enoch Wood, Samuel Piper, Eliphalet Wood, John Ladd and their associates incorporated the Loudon Social Library.

Another group of men, some nineteen years later, incorporated the Soucook Village Library. They were Shadrach Cate, Thomas Brown, William Chamberlain, Joseph Baker, Joseph Haines, Preserved Robertson, Philip Brown, Joshua Emery, Philip Brown Jr., and their associates. This organization must have succeeded, for in 1876 a fifteen page catalog of books was published for the Soucook Library Association by a press in Concord.

1833 saw eight Loudon families on Upper City Road unite with some Pittsfield families to form a Sabbath School Library just over the town line. By 1837 this group had 82 books in circulation.

Special opening ceremonies for the Maxfield Public Library were held June 24, 1909. A public dinner was served at the Grange Hall, with music furnished by a quartet from the Canterbury Shakers. Speakers included Rev. Carter Cate, a native of Loudon; Mr. Rundlett, Superintendent of Concord Schools; Mr. Whitford, Superintendent of Pittsfield and Loudon schools; Dr. Wm. A. Megrath, chairman of Loudon School board; Mr. Samuel Cate, secretary of the school library trustees and school board member, and Mr. A. L. Osgood. Rev. D.M. Phillips of the Free Baptist Church in Canterbury offered the prayer.

Trustees in charge of construction, Caleb D. Marston, J. Fred Greene, and Samuel N. Cate, were present, with J. Fred Greene as president of the day. Lizzie A. Sanborn, wife of J.E. Sanborn, Esq., was secured by them as the first librarian. Branches were opened at the Center and at the Ridge, with Miss Gertrude Clough and Miss Alice Clough in charge, respectively.

About 800 books were on hand opening day, and ironically from our Bicentennial vantagepoint, 73 were loaned out that day. John S. R. Brown, the oldest man in town, was accorded the honor of taking out the first book. It is said that he read twelve books in twelve weeks.

Today the Library's own collection is supplemented by volumes loaned through the State Library Bookmobile. Last year, three thousand one hundred and forty three books were made available to the townspeople in this way. A total 1972 circulation of three thousand four hundred and five items was reported. Pressures on the institution indicate that provisions must soon be made for running water and toilet facilities within the building.

Fred Greene, one of the first trustees of the Maxfield Public Library.

Marguerite E. Buzzel, Librarian, has devoted several years of service in that capacity. Along with occasional volunteer help she has prepared seasonal and historical displays so necessary for a pleasant reading atmosphere.

A copy of a manuscript in the N.H. Historical Society archives.

School Report of the Town of Loudon

Eight out of fourteen of our teachers the past Winter have been females, and I think the schools, for the most part, have been more profitable than when taught by males. Females are better adapted than males to impart knowledge to youth. Young men spend a few months in teaching, for the mere purpose of procuring the means to help them into some more lucrative business. While, if young ladies were paid the compensation now paid to males, would make teaching their profession.

The females who have taught in our Winter schools for the last two years have been better scholars than males, with a few honorable exceptions, and have kept better schools.

It is very essential that such ones should be procured who are adapted to the particular schools they are to keep.

We should feel as though we were living and laboring for the welfare of our children. Our desire should be to provide for them the finest instruction and throw around them the healthiest influences. Now a neat, convient and pleasantly located school house is one of these influences and an impressive one.

Cat

Mouse

Horse

Dog

The Annual Group Class Photographs

We already have several of these model school houses, but they lack one essential addition, viz., maps, globes, Mathematical apparatus and Webster's unabridged dictionary, with which no school room is complete.

If a union could be effected in our school districts so to make one from No. 13 and 9 and one from

No. 5, 6, and 12 the money in these several districts would be expended with much more profit.

A good and profitable school is more to be desired, though it be at a distance, than a short unprofitable one at our door.

Loudon Merrimack Co.
March 22d. 1858
To the Secretary of the board of education

S. S. Committee.

Nath'l. Shannon

INDUSTRY

Log handlers of yesterday.

Inside a water powered sawmill.

Log handlers today.

A beehive of activity of all types. In 1860 Loudon had 2 grist mills, 5 saw mills, 2 tanneries, 1 manufactory for flannel, 2 carriage factories, 1 chair factory, and several lesser mechanic establishments.

Albin Sanborn, lifelong operator of water powered sawmill.

MAPLE PRODUCTION

Maple production in Loudon goes back to the earliest white settlement. Two veteran maple syrup makers from Loudon Center speak of a large maple tree, which when cut during the early part of the present century, showed nearly 200 years of growth rings. Near the center of the tree and close to the ground was an old spile hole, such as the ones drilled in colonial times. In these holes were placed spiles made of hollowed out sumac stems. Cutting the tree revealed this clue locked for years deep within the veteran maple. Thus indicating the antiquity of maple sugaring in Loudon.

One of the last major oxen powered N.H. sapping

AGRICULTURE

Historically, Loudon is an agricultural town. In 1885 it ranked third in Merrimack County in the value of its agricultural products. Only two other towns in the county then produced as much corn, and none as much wheat or maple sugar. Perhaps the same claim could be made today of our maple products. Two thirds of Loudon at that time was field or pasture, thus making it an excellent town for grazing. Typical productions of Loudon's soil are indicated by these yield statistics for 1849: corn, 8,000 bushels; potatoes, 43,639 bushels, hay, 3,905 tons; wool, 7,958 pounds; and maple sugar, 22,619 pounds.

Presently, farming remains a viable way of life for many Loudon people. Dairying, poultry raising, maple production, and small scale mixed gardening predominant. Considerably fewer farms exist today, however, than in the past. Telltale stonewalls interlacing our woods bear mute testimony to this. Sadly, today's economic pressures are slowly cutting up even those scenic and historic farmsteads which remain.

HOMEGROWN OCCUPATIONS

The Rowses Restoring Concord Coaches

National Championships at Bryar Raceway

In addition to the more common means of earning a living, Loudon has a bumper crop of home grown occupations.

Starting about 1800, the Osborn family manufactured redware at their family pottery in Loudon. Today their pieces are collectors items. The tradition of craftsmanship established then is being carried on today by a variety of craftsmen and hobbyists.

As one might guess, farming has been the main occupation in Loudon, along with its complementary ventures, logging and maple sugaring. Bruce Yeaton, a local historian, reports that a cottage system of boot and shoe production was also established in Loudon years ago as a means of augmenting farm income.

Today there is a dearth of professional people who practice in Loudon. At least a dozen doctors have had offices here over the years, yet today not one remains. Five church's worth of preachers and thirteen school's worth of teachers are no more.

Economics of the Westward Expansion just after the Civil War caused many New England farmers to decline or fold up. Loudon has also felt these effects. In our own times, fewer people are farming and more are driving to jobs in outlying towns.

Such businesses as charcoal making, silver and gold mining, and silkworm raising all were practiced in Loudon. Of these, only the charcoal industry endured long. A Loudon kiln, in fact, supplied some of the charcoal for the Durgin silver factory in Concord.

THEY ANSWERED THE CALL

From Bunker Hill to Southeast Asia

No standing pigeon-rest statues may be found in our town square. Instead, simple monuments commemorate the names of all Loudon sons who have gone to battle.

Most notable of the thirty two Loudon men who fought in the Revolution was Capt. Benjamin Sias, commander of a unit at Bennington, and later a delegate to the State Constitutional Convention. His precedent of gallantry was followed by our soldiers in every major American conflict.

Calloused hands and hawk eyes of scores of our farm boys went South during the Great Rebellion to put down the Rebels. In 1916 when Pancho Villa's bandits raided New Mexico, Loudon's Herm Annis was there to defend our colors. Similarly there was no scarcity of volunteers to go "over there" in both World Wars and during the Asian conflict.

Loudon V.F.W. Post #4405 was instituted Sept. 5, 1945, with Bill Chesley as first commander. The women's Auxiliary was formed the following spring, with Bessie Towle as president. Presently there are three life members. Under Norm Bowles' leadership in 1965-66 a new Post home was built along Route 106 on land donated by member Richard Huckins. Worthy of mention is Bill Brown's term as commander (1959-61). At age 83, he was the oldest commander in the country. The Post has sponsored various youth activities since its organization.

American Legion Post #88, Loudon, was chartered in 1946, with Leon Manchester as first commander. Fifteen names appear on the original charter. The Post has an active Auxiliary, and presently meets in the old Grange Hall in Loudon Village. The building was a gift from Loudon Surprise Grange #121. Bill Brown is the only life member, and was at the first American Legion meeting in Paris. Mr. Brown has been a Legionnaire for 54 years. Several youth activities, including Scout Troop 247 and Cub Scouts, have been sponsored by the Post.

READY IN ANY EMERGENCY

With huge annual influxes of racing enthusiasts, law enforcement in Loudon today is vastly more difficult than it was in 1773 when Moses Ordway was chosen as the first constable.

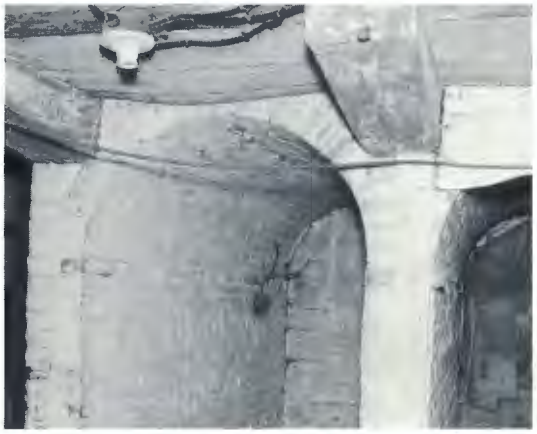
In recent years, however, the elected office of constable has given way to a Selectmen-appointed police chief. Robert Fiske, our present chief, has served in that capacity since 1969. It was said that Fiske was then the youngest police chief in New Hampshire, having just turned 22.

In 1956 a new cement block police station was built in Loudon Village with volunteer labor. This year, a new cruiser and radio equipment were purchased.

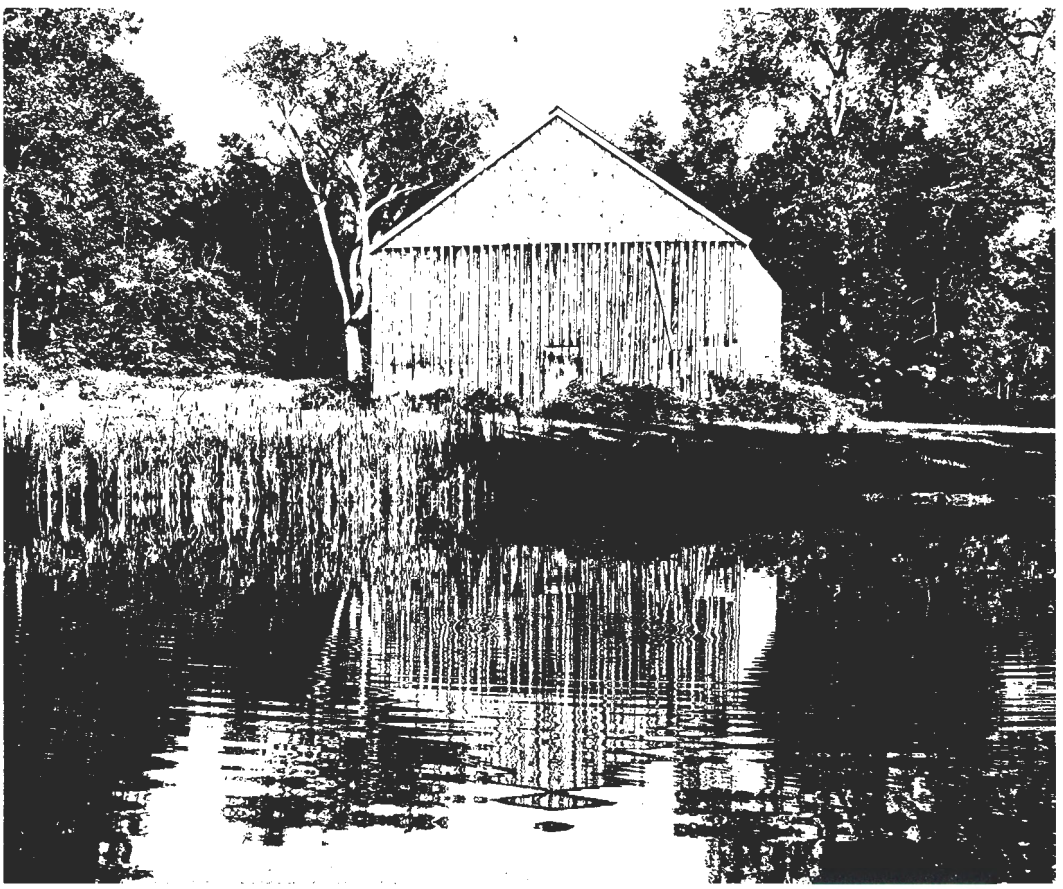
Prior to the 1940's, Loudon lacked adequate fire protection. Largely through the efforts of Bill Brown, our volunteer fire department came into existence. Loudon Fire Department has since expanded into a rigorous organization with a branch station at Loudon Ridge. Well trained men and modern equipment are characteristic of the department.

In addition, a Women's Auxiliary keeps the Department socially active. Each year a picnic, harvest supper, and Christmas party are held by the firemen.

Rolling hills, dormant farms, and abundant Yankee hospitality add to the tranquil charm of Loudon. Here postcard scenery is the rule rather than the exception.



Evening breezes, and the sound of growing corn . . . Loudon



TWO hundred years from its beginning, Loudon is home for about 2,000 people of diverse occupations and levels of prosperity. Some are the descendents of families rooted in the town's history, though many more are newcomers. Surely they all have a place in the community.

A recently completed study of Capital area towns, however, indicates that Loudon ranks among the fastest growing in central New Hampshire. With this in mind, perhaps the Bicentennial is an approriate time for a hard look at our past. Why did people come to Loudon years ago? What keeps us here today? Such reflection will help us plan for the future so that on Loudon's Tricentennial, our children's children will be as proud of their town as we are this 1973.

Photo Courtesy Concord Monitor — p. 27

Photo Courtesy Ken Williams — p. 2, 11, and 32

Front Cover Drawing/Mel Bolden
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1773 - 1973

SOUVENIR

LOUDON

NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Oldest House in Loudon

BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION